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TA Training Beyond the First Week: A Leadership Perspective

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Incoming Teaching Assistants (TAs) have a lot to absorb. They attend departmental training sessions as well as a campus-wide orientation. In addition, most of them have recently moved and are adjusting to an unfamiliar community. Given the bombardment of information and various preoccupations, much of the content covered during initial training sessions for TAs often will require a refresher. Despite the best efforts of the basic course director to secure the full attention of incoming TAs, he or she cannot cover everything during the initial meetings and probably should not even attempt to do so. As Nyquist and Sprague (1992) have noted , "there are some things TAs are not ready to learn prior to teaching" (p. 107); they do not have the knowledge base and experience which will allow reflection.

Clearly, there is a need for ongoing training and dialogue. More than common sense suggests this; drawing upon educational theory and numerous studies, Nancy Chism (1993) contends that ongoing training and support are "just as important" for TA development as any initial training. Chism concludes that research which informs ongoing training should be "the main direction for the future" (p. 34).

However we prioritize our research goals, ongoing training and development should constitute a major area of inquiry and investigation. Some scholars have taken impressive steps in this direction and have explored the developmental processes of TAs (Nyquist & Sprague, 1992; Sprague & Nyquist,

1991). In addition to understanding more about the development of novice instructors, we need to understand more about the repertoire of those who are to work with them, an area some scholars are beginning to probe (Allen, 1991; Boehrer & Chevrier, 1991; Hinck & Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1993; Sprague & Nyquist, 1989).

As we reassess our methods for training and development, we can broaden our understanding by incorporating studies of leadership. These studies suggest that effective direction of the basic course requires a variety of leadership styles in order to facilitate growth, garner support and ensure the quality of the course. The purpose of this paper is to provide a framework for assisting inexperienced instructors of the basic course while simultaneously utilizing and encouraging the insights of experienced staff. In delineating this framework, this paper explores theories and studies of leadership and their implications for ongoing efforts to train TAs and to assist with their development. Then, the paper juxtaposes this area of scholarship with literature pertaining to basic course directorship. Finally, the paper presents strategies for effective leadership in the basic course which are grounded in theory and research. While this manuscript primarily addresses concerns the novice course director might have about supervising TAs, it may also yield insights for more experienced course directors.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SAVVY

Leadership studies describe effective communication and how to assist with improved subordinate performance. One particular leadership perspective, *life-cycle theory* (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982) seems applicable to the course director-TA relationship. "Derived from empirical studies" and widely implemented (Bass, 1990, p. 464), this "popular" theory (Barge, 1994, p. 48) suggests that supervisors alter their style

based on the maturity level of the staff member. Maturity refers both to *job maturity*- — an individual's ability to perform a certain task — as well as *psychological maturity* — the individual's confidence and motivation to perform the task.

Four profiles of maturity levels are identified. A mature individual has both the knowledge and skill required to perform a task as well as the confidence and motivation. Some individuals possess job maturity (i.e., have ability) but lack psychological maturity (e.g., confidence or motivation). Other individuals lack job maturity but have psychological maturity. Finally, some individuals have neither job maturity nor psychological maturity. In addition, maturity may vary with the task (e.g., the individual may lecture well but falter with classroom activities). On the basis of these four profiles, life-cycle theory identifies four leadership styles that correspond to the maturity level of the subordinate (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982).

Styles of Leadership

The *telling style,* defines the roles as well as the tasks for an individual and provides close supervision and specific directions. This style is most appropriate for a subordinate with low job maturity and/or low psychological maturity. Failure to monitor and oversee the performance of an individual with low maturity (in either realm) would reinforce unproductive behaviors (Vecchio, 1987). In addition, individuals who perceive themselves as lacking competence "may prefer a great deal of direction, guidance, and attention . . . until they have mastered the job," especially if they have faith in and are satisfied with their supervisor (Bass, 1990, p. 446, 453).

The *selling style* identifies goals and problems and specifies a strategy to seek a subordinate's agreement with the supervisor's suggestions. For example, the director might

perceive that the TA has moderate job maturity and would benefit from assistance. At the same time, the director senses the individual's capability to appreciate goals and to execute a recommended course of action as well as to understand a problem and to see the merit of a proposed solution. By analyzing the situation and recommending a course of action, the director guides the individual through a pedagogical problem, hopefully to increase the person's job maturity as well as to boost his or her psychological maturity.

A *participating style* is less directive. For example, the director might offer suggestions but listen carefully and in a supportive manner, allowing a TA to participate in decision-making and to share in the responsibility for those decisions. This style recognizes and rewards moderate to high levels of maturity. It communicates confidence and trust in the individual. Close monitoring and supervision might produce resentment from those who perceive themselves (rightly or wrongly) to have adequate ability and motivation for the task (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982, p. 165).

When a director employs a *delegating style*, she or he provides minimal direction or support. The director might identify a task but has the individual devise and execute a plan to accomplish it. The director would be available for assistance and would watch from a distance, keeping communication channels open, commending progress and praising success. Employing this style conveys that the director has complete faith in the ability and motivation of the individual and recognizes that person has high maturity. In addition, delegating can provide a learning opportunity, thus further enhancing the individual's job maturity. Delegating should also boost psychological maturity by instilling a sense of collegiality — unless the director overloads the individual, fails to clarify the task, fails to empower the person for the task, or if the supervisor seems to shirk her or his own responsibility by dumping "undesirable

assignments" on the TA (Bass, 1990, pp. 437-438, 454). Such incidents sap motivation and damage the relationship.

Obviously, as these examples illustrate, an individual's maturity level is not static. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) observe that change occurs. For example, as a novice learns and gains experience, job maturity *ideally* increases as does psychological maturity. Decreases also may occur, particularly in regard to psychological maturity. Troubles in an individual's personal life or a sense of overload or burnout, for instance, may reduce one's motivation. Hence, the basic course director must be sensitive to change, reassess each individual and adapt accordingly, all with an eye toward nurturing maturation levels. To make these adaptations in style and to understand the implications of each, the director can benefit from the literature that profiles types of leaders, the power they employ, and the response engendered by a particular approach.

Types of Leaders:

Recent studies of *transactional* and *transformational* leadership provide additional insights for course directors that illuminate the dynamics of life cycle theory. Transactional leaders — following the social exchange model — "typically rely on their formal position within a . . . hierarchy to provide rewards and punishments and to motivate followers" (Barge, 1994, p. 52). They reward subordinates who perform well, and they intervene when performance is inadequate. Studies reveal that subordinates associate images of "disciplinarian" and "autocrat" with the transactional leader (Barge, 1994, p. 176). Such perceptions seem to reflect life cycle theory's premise that subordinates may resent a director they perceive as too prescriptive or watchful.

In contrast, the transformational leader relies on communication skills and modeling. Transformational leaders utilize

their rhetorical skills to "create a compelling vision of the future, which prompts shifts in follower beliefs, needs, and values" (Barge, 1994, p. 52). Transformational leaders inspire their subordinates because of their vision and because of the faith and respect that they give to them. The transformational leader motivates subordinates by articulating goals in an eloquent, understandable fashion. In addition, the transformational leader is supportive and considerate of individual subordinates (Barge, 1994). Such a leader also stimulates thinking and reflection among subordinates by offering and facilitating careful, insightful analysis and critique of the status quo. Subordinates often describe the transformational leader as "charismatic, visionary, and farsighted" (Barge, 1994, p. 176).

In view of life cycle theory, course directors could employ both transformational and transactional leadership, depending on the individual and the situation. Ideally, the course director will rely upon transformational leadership. Doing so will nurture both the job maturity as well as the psychological maturity of the staff and will yield higher levels of satisfaction. Transformational leadership is more effective in producing high levels of empowerment, commitment, satisfaction, motivation, and effort among followers. This, in turn, facilitates organizational performance (Barge,1994). Nonetheless, the course director may have to revert to a transactional mode, should a staff member not respond to transformational leadership. In this event, the director would closely monitor and react to the individual's performance.

Studies of *power bases* offer similar advice to leaders. To utilize transactional leadership, directors would employ what French and Raven (1959) identified as coercive power (i.e., ability to punish), legitimate power (authority of office), and reward power (ability to reward). A person with transformational leadership would employ what French and Raven identify as expert power (i.e., perceived level of expertise) and referent power (i.e., the degree to which one likes, admires, or

identifies with another). In an early study exploring compliance and satisfaction associated with power bases, Bachman, Bowers, and Marcus (1968) found that within a Liberal Arts College, expert power most strongly motivated compliance and produced satisfaction, followed by legitimate power — although it had little influence upon satisfaction, referent power as third and producing satisfaction, and reward power as fourth — though not strongly related to satisfaction. People consistently expressed dissatisfaction with coercive power.

Studies characterize the effective leader as a person who respects power and understands how people react to it. The leader knows that individuals with maturity generally favor *participative* leadership, a style of leadership where the leader shares power by empowering subordinates. Participative leadership actively involves subordinates in the problem solving and decision making process and allows individual freedom and access to information (Bass, 1990). The participative style can enhance understanding, motivate compliance, and bolster morale (Hersey & Stinson, 1980).

The basic course director who uses a participative style generally benefits from improving the quality of decisions. The staff has instructional experiences that the director has not had as well as insights about what can and should be done in the classroom or with some aspect of the course. A director who restricts the upward flow of information or ideas via an overly-directive style stifles the staff and potentially squelches useful insights and information (Guest, Hersey, & Blanchard, 1986; see also Bass, 1990).

The effective leader also knows when to award less power to subordinates. The leader understands that individuals who perceive themselves as possessing insufficient competence favor *directive* styles of leadership from the course director — a style in which a decision is made and then announced and explained to the group. Individuals with a low level of maturity may prefer directive guidance until they have

gained job maturity (Bass, 1990). For these individuals directive leadership produces greater satisfaction. In addition, a directive style may result in higher productivity and better decisions if the leader has more expertise on a particular matter. In such instances it may be counterproductive for the leader to employ a participative style (Bass, 1990).

In some situations, a directive style is appropriate even with a mature staff. Assuming that they are satisfied with the leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982), mature individuals respect and even favor directive leadership when used for decisions which require swift action or which are of little consequence to them. In the case of the latter, they would rather not be bothered with the mundane (Bass, 1990).

Eventually though, as prescribed by life cycle theory, the course director should nudge the staff forward via a participative style, even if they prefer a directive style. Professionalism entails responsibility, and to develop responsibility the director must involve the staff in decisions and problem solving (Bass, 1990). To do otherwise may engender dependence, resentment, or both.

Perhaps the most effective style for the basic course director is combining the directive and the participative styles with a primary utilization of the latter. As Barge (1994) has noted, the effective leader "facilitates peoples' understanding of . . . goals and problems . . . and coordinates their joint activity to meet those challenges" (p. 28). To foster an understanding of goals and problems which face the staff, basic course directors can draw upon the insights of staff, other colleagues, and the relevant literature in order to identify actual and potential problems and to devise solutions.

Each of these theories of leadership provides insights about approaches for directing the basic course. When combined, these theories construct a profile of an effective course director as one who is sensitive to the staff, who is able to discern individual maturity levels, and who tailors messages to equip, inspire, and motivate each individual to perform

effectively. Course directors who employ transformational, transactional, participative, and directive styles appropriately will help their staff perform better and be more satisfied (Bass, 1990). Effective directors respect power; they can function effectively in both a participative and directive mode and know which style is appropriate given the situation or the individual. These directors empower the staff through competence, confidence, and professionalism. In short, as with any effective manager, the successful course director will develop, hone, and employ a "variety of styles" (Bass, 1990, p. 442).

ENLISTING EXPERIENCE AND RELEVANT THEORY

Complementing the research on leadership, recent scholarship regarding directorship of the basic course and TA training offers suggestions for the ongoing training and development of TAs. In studying the development of novice instructors, Sprague and Nyquist (1992) echo life cycle theory when they observe that we must design a training program for TAs that meets their specific needs as they move through various "developmental phases" (p. 103). Nyquist and Sprague (1991) emphasize that the successful director will be able to "identify individual needs" and to "match training programs to those needs" (p. 295). They note that "direct instruction may be appropriate at the early stages of . . . development" but that direct instruction is "antithetical" to the "later goals of developing autonomy, confidence and a strong sense of one's own professional judgment" (p. 305). Ultimately, they observe (1992), directors want TAs to become "independent, autonomous, reflective problem solvers able to handle the unique situations that will confront them throughout their careers as teachers" (p. 103).

In terms of the early stages of development, Nyquist and Sprague (1991) identify TAs as "colleagues in training" whom we have placed in charge of their own section of a "carefully designed and structured course." At this stage, the director supervises the instructor closely, discusses and clarifies content issues, and emphasizes "practice of specific instructional skills such as lecturing, leading discussions, criticizing speeches, and constructing examinations" (p. 105). As with life cycle theory, Nyquist and Sprague suggest that at this early stage of development close involvement is necessary. In addition, as Fleuriet (1993) observes, this degree of involvement with first-time instructors gives the TAs "more confidence" (p. 158), an observation which likewise supports life cycle theory.

Ideally, the director has a course at her or his disposal to assign readings and to orchestrate reflection in a manner akin to Allen's (1991) suggestions. In a seminar for new TAs, Allen provides information about teaching followed by "guided practice" and then "guided reflection" upon their own teaching as well as that of their peers. Midway through the semester TAs submit a paper which reflects upon their own teaching endeavors with regard to the various concepts covered in class. Reflection, educational theorists note, allows job maturation as well as psychological maturation, although, Allen cautions, in order to facilitate quality reflection the director must expose TAs to relevant "theory and research-based knowledge" as well as recognize their need for experience (p. 313). Allen's seminar emphasizes reflection. His syllabus features three observations of teaching followed by individual debriefing sessions. At semester's end Allen reviews the student evaluations of each instructor and meets with individual instructors to discuss their evaluations and reflect upon their performance.

Observations of teaching can be especially instructive in that they require thoughtful reflection. Directors might structure the observation to facilitate reflection, before, during,

and after the visit, in a manner akin to the model outlined by Andrews (1983) which provides insights on how to conduct an nonthreatening, effective observation of teaching that will enable growth. In addition, directors could employ a participative style by encouraging each instructor to help evaluate his or her own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. Instructors might visit one another's classes and observe other classes to reflect on teaching.

Observation of teaching serves another important function; it conveys appreciation. As Boehrer and Chevrier (1991) observe: "Spending as little as one class period a semester observing an actual teaching performance, and devoting some additional time to debriefing it, can communicate a powerful message about the value of the teaching assistant's contribution to the course" (p. 329). If done in a supportive manner, this interaction facilitates positive relational development and encourages an ongoing dialogue about teaching.

Consistent with life cycle theory, the director should allow TAs to test out their mastery of what has been reviewed and discussed. The amount of space needed varies across TAs but generally increases with maturity. Nyquist and Sprague (1992) acknowledge that TAs need some room to grow, observing that at some point they "must make the break away from their mentors to experience autonomy and separateness" (p. 109). Recognizing and respecting the need for independence and experimentation in their own instructional pursuits allows TAs to grow. To facilitate a break that is not disruptive, the director could provide autonomy from the very start. At the same time, the director should help TAs realize that autonomy is not complete, rather they should recognize and accept interdependency. They must view themselves as part of a larger community whose members share training, goals, and ethics (Nyquist & Sprague, 1992). They must view their director as a colleague and should assist the director's efforts to ensure quality and consistency.

Interdependency underlies the participative style and is shaped by dialogue and discussion. Boehrer and Chevrier (1991) underscore the importance of interdependency, suggesting that directors facilitate an ongoing dialogue "based on inquiry" (p. 326). Boehrer and Chevrier recommend that course directors involve their staff in defining teaching objectives and in discussing how to achieve those objectives. To employ this participative style, they observe, enhances effectiveness in the course (p. 327). In addition, Fleuriet (1993) notes, this type of participation allows greater efficiency and consistency among recitation sections.

Course directors might help TAs recognize that they need to develop and refine their skills. Even after they reach a level of effective teaching, they can "benefit from discussions, workshops, or practicum experiences, addressing more advanced issues" (Nyquist & Sprague, 1992, p. 107). Directors set an example by pursuing such endeavors themselves as well as by providing such opportunities for their staff.

In addition to providing formal instruction, conducting workshops, and facilitating an ongoing dialogue about pedagogical matters, the director might employ "small talk." Small talk maintains open channels of communication. By encouraging honesty and openness so that TAs let the director know how they feel and what they are thinking, the director can discern needs as well as level of development (Nyquist & Sprague, 1992). In addition, small talk enables the TA and director to identify with one another's experiences and goals. In this manner, small talk functions to perpetuate the relationship and to ensure its stability (Duck & Pond, 1989; Duck, 1990) as well as to reinforce the value of participation and involvement that is sought in more formal processes.

As the TA matures, the relationship with the director changes and, as life cycle theory suggests, the director should adjust appropriately. Nyquist and Sprague (1992) emphasize the importance of maintaining a healthy "relationship" with individual instructors and have noted that to do so requires

time and effort as the supervisor attempts to discern and attend to the individual's particular needs. According to these authors, "a corollary to the kind of close, highly personalized mentoring that goes into directing a dissertation should be part of the advanced training of our next generation of professors" (pp. 102-103).

Mentoring also comes from many sources other than the director. TAs identify with other professors or TAs, and directors can encourage these relationships by nurturing collegiality. As Nyquist and Sprague (1992) observe: "It is at the earliest phase of development that we want TAs to form the habit of talking about teaching communication with colleagues" (p. 107). Such talk assists their mastery of the subject and their development as instructors as they discuss and compare methods of instruction, an especially useful activity, and ways to motivate student performance.

Involving veteran TAs in the orientation of new instructors and in ongoing training promotes camaraderie and reflection. By involving veteran TAs, directors display faith in their staff and open the channels of communication to a support group. Not only will the new TAs benefit from the dialogue, but seasoned TAs will benefit as well in that they must provide reasons for using particular strategies in teaching (Sprague & Nyquist, 1992).

Veteran TAs should become familiar with productive leadership styles that sensitize them to an individual's needs. This approach safeguards novices against would-be mentors who become too supervisory or overbearing. Veteran TAs need to understand that resentment likely will arise among individuals who feel both capable and motivated to do a particular task if their efforts are curtailed. They also need to understand that novices can benefit from being given latitude to experiment on their own. The course director may have to caution a veteran TA who provides inadvisable leadership.

Some directors have found that "second year TAs . . . may not be the best mentors for new TAs" because at that stage of

their growth they may feel "cynical toward students and challenging toward authority" (Sprague & Nyquist, 1991, p. 310). Given this possibility, the basic course director may want to encourage mentoring from those who would best nurture skills and productive attitudes. The director may wish to hold discussion meetings to surface and diffuse any cynicism.

The literature pertaining to directorship of the basic course and to TA training and development corroborates theories of leadership. To provide effective direction requires creative leadership calibrated to the individual and aimed at immediate needs. The director helps the staff develop into competent and confident colleagues who can assist in building and operationalizing a better course. At the same time, the director must oversee the basic course in its present state.

To achieve such leadership certain conditions must exist. Leadership styles, in order to be enacted, require that the leader be able to operate from the appropriate power base. For example, transactional leaders must have the ability to reward or punish. Another condition is a supportive environment. The supportive environment will require ample opportunities for interaction among peers and with the director. Not only must the opportunity exist, but interactants will have to be available and to expend the time. In addition, the director will also need time to devise materials and to update them regularly. Hence, there are some obvious limitations to the application of this theory. Assuming that the director can draw upon the various power bases, can nurture a supportive environment, and can find the time necessary, she or he can implement the strategies described below.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND FOR RUNNING THE BASIC COURSE

The following six strategies offer insights for effective leadership in the basic course. Leadership studies and recent scholarship pertaining to directorship of the basic course and to TA training illuminate why these strategies are useful and validate what many directors may have pursued intuitively and/or view as commonplace.

1. *Accommodate various levels of maturity among the staff.* A director often works with a staff whose maturity levels vary from individual to individual and range from novice to seasoned veteran. A common handbook, a resource manual, and a resource center helps a director to accommodate all by providing structure and yet inviting participation.
    a. A *handbook for the course* (a custom publication which students will purchase) provides detailed descriptions of assignments, policies, and procedures which not only inform students but also guide instruction. Beyond promoting consistency across sections and the overall integrity of the course, a handbook assists instructors who stand before the classroom for the first time (i.e., possess low maturity). To accommodate veteran instructors (who possess higher levels of maturity), the director might enlist their assistance in preparing the handbook. The director might involve the staff in a critique of the handbook and fashion a new, improved "package" for the following semester. The director could encourage an ongoing, informal dialogue and schedule a formal meeting for critiquing and revising the handbook. The meeting would be held after instructors have had an opportunity to assess its strengths and weaknesses. TAs might offer their input to help construct a tentative agenda prior to the meeting. *All* TAs should par-

ticipate and air their views with the understanding that they are the architects of the forthcoming improved course package.

Viewed as a leadership tool, the handbook allows the director simultaneously to engage a participative style with veterans and a more directive style for incoming TAs. Novice TAs will have substantial direction and support from the package and staff members who are intimately familiar with its components can explain and otherwise assist new TAs. Peer mentoring becomes automatic as veteran TAs emerge as leaders. In addition, the director can boost maturity levels by actively involving the staff (novices and veterans alike) in discussions which reflect upon pedagogical and curricular matters and which discuss relevant educational philosophies, theories, and knowledge.

b. An *assistance manual,* assembled for the staff, answers common inquiries. An assistance manual accommodates the need for various levels of knowledge and minimizes repetition of the mundane. As Fleuriet (1993) observes, such a booklet "will save the BCD [basic course director] time because those teaching the course will have easy access to answers to many questions which would normally have to be answered by the BCD" (p. 158). The assistance manual answers simple yet vital questions such as where to procure a grade book, strategies for taking attendance and establishing speaking order, what to do about excessive absence, and what role to play and who to contact when a student is distraught, as well as a wealth of other informational items. The manual might repeat and elaborate on material

covered during initial training sessions as well as feature additional readings that enhance pedagogical knowledge, such as philosophies and strategies for providing in-class oral critiques of student performances. The manual should be well-indexed and each entry written concisely and with an accessible style. As with the handbook for students, the manual should undergo constant revision. The staff can participate (formally and/or informally) in this process.

c. An *instructor's resource center* centralizes the location of various pedagogical materials. It provides assistance as well as encourages reflection and the exchange of ideas. The center could feature a library of readings to supplement the textbook, including other textbooks, relevant journals such as *Communication Education* and *The Speech Teacher,* copies of the *Basic Communication Course Annual,* and a collection of idea papers — both published and those written in-house by the director and staff. In addition, files of sample lectures, discussion topics, and activities could be kept in the center. The resource center also could house a video collection (e.g., student speeches for training and/or classroom instruction) and ideally would feature equipment for video playback and dubbing. A small section within the departmental library might suffice for the center.

2. *Establish and maintain ongoing contact.* The amount of contact with TAs varies according to maturity and need, with low-maturity individuals generally requiring and desiring more involvement. Hence, meeting regularly with new instructors to provide timely coverage of various pedagogical matters is effective for

novice TAs. For example, TAs could discuss approaches to instruction, including lecture, discussion, and activity early in the semester. They also could discuss types of students, styles for classroom management, the purposes of critique and strategies for providing effective in-class criticisms. Prior to the first exam they could discuss the purpose and functions of testing and how to construct a solid test item. Before papers are due they could discuss methods of grading that will assist student development. For more mature individuals, the director might be available as needed and maintain contact in a more informal manner.

The director can employ "small talk" to promote an ongoing dialogue and can encourage interaction via an open door policy for the staff. The director recognizes that open, steady dialogue provides a context for discovery. The director might also meet formally with the entire staff to evaluate the course in terms of curriculum, policies and procedures. Conducting the meetings with a participative style likely will promote camaraderie as well as boost maturity levels.

3. *Provide space from the start.* Although ongoing instruction and close contact with TAs is necessary during their first semester, TAs will need room to grow and to develop. In addition, breaking away is a natural tendency which the director might assist by building in some latitude from the start. Doing so minimizes the chances of a disruptive break in which a TA feels compelled to assert her or his independence. The director may wish to structure a few instructor's discretionary assignments (10 per cent or so of the final grade) into the syllabus to allow for experimentation as well as reflection. At the same

time, though, a comprehensive file of ideas could be available to assist anyone who needs them.

The director might encourage instructors to modify (if they see fit) any activity they pull from the files and to place their revised version alongside the original in the appropriate file. Doing so allows all TAs to benefit from another's insights and to improve their own reflection. In this manner, the instructor's discretionary assignments encourage autonomy while the process of sharing ideas emphasizes interdependency.

4. *Provide exposure and experience.* Publicize and make available various relevant readings which TAs can peruse and add to their files. For lengthy readings, provide a one page synopsis. Also acquaint them with new resources to assist them — anything from videos to software. Such information builds competence and confidence as well as stimulates discussion. Encourage them to be publicists as well.

   Facilitate experiences that involve them and boost their maturity. For example, the director might require that TAs submit an item or two for each exam and provide feedback to their submissions. They not only can learn from the process but also might appreciate seeing one or more of their items appear on the exam. The director might also solicit and react to their most successful lesson plan, activity, or discussion idea. The submission would not only promote reflection but also would provide quality material for course files.

5. *Visibly involve and reward.* Encourage participation by letting TAs know that their involvement is expected and valued. For example, rotate veteran TAs to assist with training and development during orien-

tation as well as with ongoing efforts. For example, while discussing classroom critiques of student speeches, veteran TAs could illustrate how they would evaluate a speech from the video collection and how they use the taped speech in their classroom to facilitate discussion and to clarify their expectations.

Directors in programs that feature mass lectures might ask veteran TAs to deliver the lectures a few times during the semester. Doing so acknowledges confidence in their ability as well as provides them with valuable experience as they test their command of the subject matter. In addition, their example might motivate other instructors to volunteer to conduct a mass lecture. TAs recognize that their involvement in mass lecture will build their own credibility as well as that of the staff.

6. *Employ a directive style when appropriate.* Recognize that crises or exigencies require swift action and little time to consult even the most mature individuals of the staff. In such instances directors should make the decision and then inform the staff of the decision and the rationale. Directors might follow up with a participative style, welcoming a review of the decision for future reference.

   Directors should underscore the importance of consistency, noting that course standards *must* be upheld. They might emphasize that instructors must work with the package that has assembled and agreed upon. If an instructor is less than satisfied with something, he or she may suggest revisions for the next package.

Obviously, these strategies are only a few which illustrate how a life cycle theory of leadership can be used to train and

develop TAs and to oversee tasks of the immediate course. The practices described in this article may prove especially useful for the director of a basic course that features numerous sections and that relies upon instructors who range in level of experience. These strategies allow the director to target those instructors who require the most direction and to garner the assistance of instructors with more expertise.

CONCLUSION

Life-cycle theory of leadership suggests that basic course directors should be attuned to their staff and administer to their particular needs. The director should constantly assess individual capabilities as well as motivation and be careful not to provide too much or too little involvement and assistance. The director must recognize that in order to grow, people need nurturing but they also require some latitude for experimentation. In addition, studies of transactional versus transformational leadership, the study of power bases, and findings regarding directive versus participative styles of leadership complement life-cycle theory and provide additional insights on working effectively with the staff and nurturing their growth. Participation of mature individuals will foster and sustain healthy relations. Mature TAs will break away; they need to be encouraged toward the interdependency that characterizes of a team of professionals.

The basic course director can be an effective leader by fashioning materials and providing resources and support in a manner that will accommodate the various maturity levels of the staff and their individual needs. The director also can adapt the level of direction and involvement with regard to the maturity levels of the staff. The director can promote their growth by allowing experimentation, emphasizing interdependency, and by visibly involving and rewarding them. The director can improve the course and foster compliance and

camaraderie by involving the staff in dialogue and discussion — both formally and informally. All the while, though, the director must remain the director, overseeing the integrity of the course and meeting her or his accountability to the students and to the department. In this manner, the basic course director provides the leadership that achieves success for the basic course and for the staff.

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